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SUBJECT: UNGA: DEBATE ON THE PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION  
HIGHLIGHTS INCREMENTAL PROGRESS

¶1. On October 9 and 13 the General Assembly (GA) considered the Peacebuilding Commission's Report (A/63/92) and the Secretary-General's Report on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/63/218), which covered July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008.

¶2. In his opening statement, GA President (PGA) Miguel d'Escoto noted progress during the second year of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), referring to their initial work with Burundi, Guinea-Bissau, and Sierra Leone, and subsequent assistance to the Central African Republic (the four "agenda countries"). The PBF has also supported projects in Cote d'Ivoire, Haiti, Guinea, Liberia, Kenya and Nepal. D'Escoto called on the PBC to respect "national ownership" and involve regional actors.

¶3. Member States frequently referred to the principle of national ownership in post-conflict situations, and called for closer coordination between funds, programs, and agencies in the UN System, as well as a higher profile for the PBC.

¶4. Areas for Improvement: Jamaica disagreed with the policy that peacebuilding strategies be developed before PBF funds can be allocated. Italy said the PBC needs to improve its intervention planning, and expressed disappointment that the PBF has not provided the anticipated immediate post-conflict response. Indonesia asserted that the PBC Organizational Committee should be at the center of the PBC's work. Iceland, on behalf of the Nordic States, called for a better-defined relationship between the Peacebuilding Support Office, the PBC, and the PBF. Austria encouraged "the participation of women in all aspects of peacebuilding."

¶5. Other notable comments included those by France, on behalf of the EU, that the PBC needs fewer but better meetings, and that the PBC's work should be coordinated with the Security Council. Thailand publicized a recent ASEAN Regional Forum workshop co-sponsored with United States in Bangkok on stabilization and reconstruction. Chile called for higher participation from Latin America. Egypt called for additional African seats on the PBC.

¶6. Philosophical musings: Thailand, Indonesia and Mexico warned that sustainable peacebuilding must accompany development assistance. Ghana noted that commencement of peacebuilding assistance should not necessarily lead to the termination of peacekeeping mandates. Similarly, Italy emphasized the continuity of PKOs and peacebuilding. Pakistan said that conflicts are complicated by revenue deprivation caused by agricultural subsidies and illegal exploitation of natural resources. Chile reiterated, "the PBC should not be perceived as another development agency."

¶7. In remarks available on the Mission's web site, Mission encouraged the PBC to reach out to expertise outside the UN and better coordination within the UN.  
Wolff